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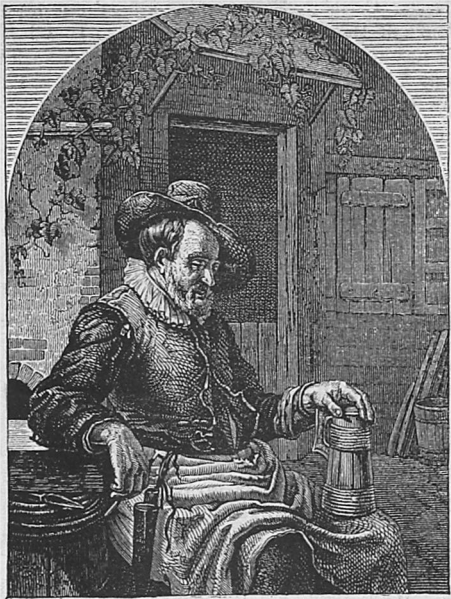
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GABRIEL METZU gives us glimpses into the interior of the houses of the wealthy middle classes of Holland. From him we learn the precise appearance of the morning *négligé* of the

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ladies, what dress they wore at noon, when about to take their lessons on the harpsichord, or receive the visits of the gallant officers or gay cavaliers who at that hour called upon them clothed in black from head to foot. Francis Miéris also shows us, as in a mirror, this same elegance, these same domestic comforts, the same carved furniture, the same polished lustres, the same splendid glasses glittering with golden liqueurs. He paints for us, in his own way, and with certain peculiarities of his own, manners in which he certainly did not partake. There was this singularity in Miéris, that while his pictures bore the expression of refined thoughts, his habits did not. His works, instead of revealing his life, concealed it.

This celebrated painter was the son of a lapidary. He was born at Leyden, on the 11th of April, 1635. "Perceiving his taste for painting," said Houbraken, "his father placed him under the tuition of Abraham Torenvliet, a famous painter on glass and a good designer. Thence he entered the school of Gerard Douw, where in a very short time he surpassed all his companions, and thus gained the affection of his master, who called him the prince of his scholars. After the lapse of some years, his father removed him to study under Abraham Van Tempel, an historical painter; but he did not remain long with him, as his natural inclination led him to adopt Gerard Douw's manner, which was extremely delicate, and required extraordinary care."

This Abraham Van Tempel was a man of large and powerful intellect, if we may judge from those of his paintings which we have seen at the Hague. His full-length portraits have a bold outline, and he was admirably calculated to inspire Miéris with a taste for historical painting; but the fact that the latter let

slip this opportunity of enlarging his style—and we were going to say his thoughts—proves beyond doubt that he perceived from the first that his true road to success lay in the track of his old master, Gerard Douw. He, therefore, returned to the studio of the latter, and continued to labour under his eye with all a pupil's modesty, often taking his advice when he was himself far more competent to judge. However, there were at Leyden several amateurs, who admired him greatly, and frequently expressed to him their surprise that he did not begin to work upon his own account and shake off the dust of the school, since he had already surpassed his master. As they were warm friends who held this language to him, he would probably have put it down to pardonable partiality, and have continued his old course, if one of them, Professor Silvius, had not volunteered, in proof of his sincerity, to purchase every painting that came from his pencil.

So flattering a proposal had the desired effect. Miéris left Gerard Douw, and began to work for himself, and, thanks to the friendship of Silvius, he was soon enabled to make a striking display of his talents. The archduke Leopold William was passionately fond of painting; Silvius persuaded him, without difficulty, to give Miéris an order, assuring him that he would receive a *chef-d'œuvre*. The artist did honour to his friend's recommendation. It was, in fact, upon this occasion that he executed the famous work so well known in Germany as "Die Seidenhändlerinn," *The Silkmercer*. It is, in truth, a gem of art. In it Miéris put into practice everything that Gerard Douw had taught him; he was perfectly competent to render the rich fabrics in all their varieties of shade and hue, lustring, satin, and velvet; he knew how to arrange the light so as to throw out the figures and the most remarkable objects into strong relief, leaving all else buried in deep but transparent shade. By tricks of the brush he was able to render the nature of each substance evident at a glance—the down upon feathers, the polish of steel; it seems as if we could touch with our finger the silky hair of a spaniel, as well as the rich woof of a Turkey carpet. Miéris knew how, in short, to lend to the actors in a scene borrowed from ordinary life all the *finesse* of expression necessary to relieve the simplicity of such a subject, and give piquancy to a matter of such slender interest.

The painting executed for the archduke represented a silk-mercer's shop, attended by a young woman of passing beauty. A nobleman, elegantly dressed, with feathers in his hat and a sword at his side, has entered, and, struck by the charms of the fair owner of the shop, cannot resist the temptation of touching her lightly under the chin with his fingers, with all the polite impertinence of a gay man of the world. The lady blushes, smiles, and continues to turn over the pieces of silk; but the gentleman is far less occupied with the richness of the articles he has come to purchase than the charms of her who shows them. At the further end of the shop, before a large fireplace, sits a man, most likely the jealous husband of the fair mercer. He has caught the stranger's movement with the corner of his eye, but not daring to give vent to his feelings before so dashing a customer, contents himself with shaking his finger ominously at his wife, as if threatening a certain lecture of no ordinary severity. The archduke was delighted. He paid Miéris a thousand florins, and offered him a pension of a thousand rix-dollars if he would consent to go to Vienna, and work there for the court, in which case his labours would be liberally recompensed. But the artist politely declined, alleging as an excuse the disinclination of his wife to leave her native country.

Henceforward the painter of Leyden found himself eagerly sought after by the amateurs. All strove which should have his works at any price. Cornelius Praats, whose son was alderman of the town of Leyden, and who had himself taken some lessons from Francis Miéris, entered into an agreement to pay him a ducat of gold for every hour it might take him to execute a painting representing the "Swooning of a Young Girl." Miéris discharged his task in Praats' house, and received not less than fifteen hundred florins. The grand duke of Tuscany having come to Leyden, on seeing this painting

was so charmed with it, that he offered Praats three thousand florins for it, but the latter would not part with it upon any terms, nor with a portrait of Madame Praats, painted also by Miéris. The same thing has probably never occurred with regard to any family portrait as with regard to this. Attempts were made to purchase it while the original was still living, as if the excellence of the work itself was sufficient to supply the want of any interest in the subject.

Not being able to meet with any amateur who would sell him a Miéris, the grand duke paid a visit to the painter himself, and amongst the works which he found in his studio in an unfinished state, was a very fine sketch, which he begged of him to complete—"An Assemblage of Ladies." Houbraken somewhere calls Metzua a painter of fashions. This singular appellation might, in this instance at least, be applied to Francis Miéris, but not in a bad sense; though there is no doubt that here the dress, or the materials of which it is composed, has an undue importance given it. If his figures were not so handsome, we might imagine that they were but a pretext for making a gorgeous display of velvet jackets, of satin petticoats, and furs. In fact, every conceivable device of luxury, every grace and elegance of fashion, appear in this work. In the background, in a sort of gallery, magnificently decorated, appear a lady and cavalier promenading up and down, and evidently engaged in agreeable chit-chat. Here a young girl, in a rich mantle of purple velvet trimmed with fur, is raising to her head a glass of some delicate wine, while a page stands before her with a silver salver; there a lady in white satin stands up with a lute in her hand, as if about to play. Opposite these splendidly attired ladies, Miéris painted a young man, wearing a short cloak of black velvet. Splendid carpets, glittering plate, a dish of bonbons, which a mischievous little monkey is eating by stealth, half-hidden under the folds of a curtain of lustring, complete the composition, which certainly displays no great depth of imagination; but the rendering of each object is marvellous, and if the hands had not been drawn in the style of Metzua and Vandyke, and had there been less distinction in the choice of the heads, one might have thought that Francis Miéris himself kept a silk-shop, like the pretty woman of his first painting, and that, unlike the gentleman in the same composition, he was more occupied with the beauties of dress than beauty of face or figure.

The search after the beautiful is one of the points in which Miéris distinguished himself, and it is upon this that his renown rests. Certainly the art of imitating dress, of polishing it by the aid of the pencil, is not sufficient to lend lustre to a painter's name, unless, indeed, he were to reach such a pitch of perfection in it as has never yet been witnessed. Paintings live only upon condition of being well executed and well touched, just as books live only on condition of being well written. But this mere excellence in form or outline is not sufficient; there must be food for the mind, and something to excite some emotion in the heart. Sometimes, we admit, when the form is exquisite, and the style of the book is piquant, though it treats of nothing—when the painter's touch is charming, and, if we may use the expression, intelligent, as in the case of a basket of strawberries, or a simple glass of water glittering with purity and freshness—it may happen that mere form will supply the want of other qualities. Thus Chardin and Metzua knew how to lend interest to the simplest scenes and incidents; but we must confess that their style is so charming, that the subtlest portion of their ability, the very essence of their character, seems to have passed into their painting; and it is in this sense that we may attribute to them great talent in execution. But if the artist has not reached this stage in his art, at which the most refined feelings of his heart drop from the point of his pencil, it is difficult for his works to survive him in the absence of some happy, animating thought. Why, then, are the works of Miéris valued as much and more at the present day than they were two hundred years ago? Because of that endeavour after the beautiful of which we just now spoke. Amongst so many Dutch painters who have chosen to copy nature at random, it is pleasant to find one who thought it not beneath him to

select models, and who, preferring grace to ugliness, has preferred painting handsome women, elegantly dressed, to sketching grotesque country wenches. This is the great secret of Miéris' success, as of that of Gaspar Netscher, of Schalken, and some others.

The grand duke of Tuscany gave a thousand rixdollars for "The Assembly of Ladies," but was not content with this alone. He wanted also, not his own portrait by Miéris, but that of Miéris by himself. The artist executed it with a good will. He painted himself showing one of his works, representing one of those subjects with which he was most familiar, "A young Girl taking her Lesson at the Harpsichord." This portrait of Miéris, which was in reality the mirror of his person and the coloured definition of his talent, was looked upon as an able work; but, according to Houbraken, the price was not this time proportioned to the value. The grand duke, at the instigation of some of his courtiers whom Miéris had offended, sent so small a sum, that the artist took umbrage at it, and refused to execute any works ever after for the Tuscan court.

Campo Weyermann relates, in the same way as Arnold Houbraken, the story of Miéris' rupture with the grand duke; but Gerard de Lairese, in his "Great Book of the Painters," explains it differently. He says, "He who has executed works on a large scale, may afterwards execute them on a small scale if he wish; whilst those who are always occupied with little things, cannot pass to great ones but with difficulty. Miéris, who was so justly celebrated for works on a small scale, has lost all the esteem in which the grand duke of Tuscany, his Mæcenas, held him, through attempting to paint portraits in life size; and it is the same with many others." It is not difficult to believe Gerard de Lairese in this matter, not only because he was a man of distinguished abilities, who made no assertion lightly, but because he was on terms of intimacy with Miéris. He had, in fact, undertaken the education of one of the artist's sons, John Miéris, who went to practise painting in Italy, where he died. By a fortunate, but curious contradiction in his character, Francis, whom the example of Jan Steen had led into habits of tippling, detested the vice in others. So Gerard de Lairese, grave and solemn in his looks, was a bit of a libertine in his manners, and for this reason Miéris removed his son from his care, lest his example should corrupt the youth's morals.

This contrast between their lives and their works is a comparatively rare feature in the history of painters. Miéris, who devoted his whole talents to search after beauty, or to the delineation of the interior of the luxurious abodes of the middle classes of Holland, then the richest and yet most austere in the world, was—we are sorry to say it—a drunkard. He was on terms of close intimacy with a painter of Leyden, the famous Jan Steen, an amusing philosopher and a professed tippler. Steen's lively conversation, his jovial disposition, his witty sallies, his careless, joyous way of living without a thought of the morrow, had a seductive influence upon Miéris, who, at last, was so fascinated that he could never tear himself away from his company. Steen having become a tavern-keeper, Miéris became one of his best customers, and the two often passed the night drinking and carousing with John Lievens, Ary de Voys, and some others. Steen was soon ruined and obliged to take down his sign, and then Miéris accompanied him to other taverns, and the two artists and their old comrades often protracted their revels far on in the night.

Houbraken tells a curious anecdote regarding one of these merry-makings. One night, after a very jovial meeting, Miéris set out to come home alone, and in crossing a narrow bridge fell off it into a deep drain. He was quite fuddled, and as it was not likely that there was any one near at such a late hour, there was every prospect of his career coming to an inglorious end. However, he roared lustily, and as good luck would have it, there was a cobbler living close at hand, and was still at work, singing and hammering away. His wife heard Miéris' cries, and having called her husband's attention to them, they both took a light and ran in the direction from which the sound came. There they found our painter, gor-

geously dressed, with gold buttons on his coat, stuck fast in the mud. They dragged him out, took him to their house, and, having dried his garments, sent him home. Miéris was thoroughly sobered by the time of his release, but was so much ashamed of the adventure that he concealed his name.

Being, however, very kind-hearted, the painter determined to reward the poor people for the kindness they had shown him, and what better token of gratitude could an artist bestow than one of his paintings. He, accordingly, set to work upon one, the subject of which has not reached us, but as he could only labour at it at intervals, it was not finished for two years. As soon as he had given it the last touch, he went one evening to the cobbler's, with his canvas concealed under his cloak. He found nobody there but the wife, and having entered into conversation with her, found that she really did not know the name of the man whom they had rescued. He then produced the picture and presented it to her, telling her to keep it as an acknowledgment of the service she had rendered him in getting him out of the drain. "But if," he added, "you would prefer money, take it to M. Praats." He then disappeared abruptly, without saying who he was. The woman showed the present to several of her neighbours, all of whom assured her it was very valuable. Her curiosity was at last thoroughly roused, and she took the picture to Jacob Vandermaas, burgomaster, residing in the Hoygraft, in whose house she had lived as a servant, who was surprised to see an article of such value in her possession, and at once recognised it as the work of Miéris, and valued it at one hundred ducatoons. "I would give that sum myself, but first go to so and so," said he, mentioning the names of some of the amateurs, "and ask eight hundred florins, and you will be sure to get them." She did as he directed, and was successful.

We have many times heard connoisseurs, in talking of painting, place Gabriel Metz above Miéris. It seems to us that Miéris' touch is sometimes painful, and even scraped and dragged, when compared with the light and intellectual touch of Metz. There is a picture of the former in the Dresden Gallery, which well illustrates the excellences of Miéris' style, and proves beyond doubt that the works of every artist, however great his genius, vary vastly in quality. In this, of which we present our readers with an engraving, (p. 24) a young girl, of light character, is listening to the proposals of an old matron. The subject is in itself rather gross, but the painter has treated it with great delicacy. The thought is clearly indicated, and yet there is nothing to shock us in the expression of it. The careless attitude of the young woman is so *distingué*, if we may be allowed the word, that it atones for the plainness of the meaning, and there is an indescribable air of voluptuous modesty about it, which interests us in the highest degree. Without showing her handsome face, except in profile, to save her the embarrassment which a little stretch of fancy will induce us to believe the full view of the spectator at such a moment would cause her, she leaves her beauty to our imagination, but lets us see her grace. The light falls upon her ear, and extends slightly upon her cheek, leaving the greater part of it in transparent shadow. Nothing can be more charming than the turn of her neck, and the knot in which her auburn hair is fastened, with pearls intermingled with the tresses. She wears a satin robe, and a sort of jacket, embroidered with gold. Her fine head leans languidly upon her left hand with a sort of lascivious indolence, the other falls gracefully over the back of the chair, and between her fingers she crumples a letter, which she has just been reading. Upon the table, on which her elbow is resting, we see a book and a mandolin. In the background appears the exterior of a palace, but within the apartment, a little to the left, may be seen a piece of furniture in the shape of an altar, on which is written the word *Amor*. The whole is finished with such exquisite delicacy, that one might fancy it was executed upon ivory. As it is considered very valuable, it is placed under glass, which gives it the appearance of a large miniature. No lover of painting could gaze on this picture without feeling the fascinating influence of female charms stealing over him.

Gerard de Lairese, in the chapter in which he speaks of painters on a small scale, and mainly of Miéris, has put several opinions upon record, which we feel it to be our duty to combat here, notwithstanding the weight they must have in coming from such a quarter. "We must remember," says he, "that objects painted on a small scale cannot be truth, nor even the appearance of truth; for there can be no doubt that paintings which represent objects thus should only be considered as nature seen from a distance, through a door or window, whether within or without a building, so that they ought to be painted in such wise that on being hung against a

artist who paints diminutive pieces, as Miéris, intends not to exhibit distant objects, but, on the contrary, to bring them nearer that they may be better seen; and if he diminishes their real size, it is in order that the spectator by approaching as closely to the picture as he pleases may be enabled to seize upon the minutest details. In the distance we see nothing but large masses; the various parts appear confused and undecided, the *contour* is lost; the angles are softened down, the precise shape of an object, and *a fortiori* the small points in its physiognomy, escape the eye completely. If, then, the painter executes his work under these conditions — that



MIERIS AND HIS WIFE. FROM A PAINTING BY MIERIS.

wall, they may not appear to be a panel or painted canvas, but that they should truly resemble a window, through which one really sees nature; a result which cannot be obtained by warm shadows or brilliant colouring, but by soft and feeble colouring, broken by the interposition of the surrounding air, according as it is serene or loaded with vapour."

To this "laying down of the law" we take exception, and, in our humble opinion, a painter, who acted upon such principles, would be sure to go astray. If it were admitted that a small painting should represent nature as she appears in the distance, the painter would plainly defeat his object. An

is, with that weakening of the tone which aerial perspective demands—what follows? Why, the spectator, by an inexplicable delusion, will see things close at hand which ought to be lost in the indistinctness of distance, and touch with his finger objects which, nevertheless, should escape him, being two hundred yards off. Is not this, then, a monstrous contradiction between the actual effect of a picture and its intention? Why does the amateur delight in the works of Gerard Douw, of Slengelandt, and Miéris? Because he wants to have in the narrow limits of his own abode an epitome of all the wonders of the pencil, an



entire gallery in a space twelve feet square. To satisfy him you must give him the incidents and characters of the outer world, condensed, as it were, into the smallest possible dimensions, the heroes of everyday life (some of them might readily be comprised within a frame of twelve inches square); and, if this be true, what becomes of Lairese's theory? Would the fortunate owner of these masterpieces in miniature be content to see these figures, which he wished to have within easy eye-reach, fading dimly in the shifting hues of the atmosphere, and flying altogether from the tranquil but confined abode in which he wished to retain them, that he might feed his eyes

Molière, Richelieu, Louis XIII., and other "glasses of fashion" at that period. He has painted himself under various aspects—sometimes as a soldier, at others as a simple citizen. The Museum at the Hague exhibits him in the interior of his own house, in his everyday dress, leaning over his wife, and amusing himself by pulling the ears of a little spaniel that his wife holds upon her knees. (See our engraving, p. 20.) The Dresden Gallery contains not less than three pictures, in which Miérís has given his own portrait with great complaisance. In one we find him in his studio conversing with a handsome girl, of whom we, however, see



THE PHILOSOPHER. FROM A PAINTING BY MIÉRIS.

upon them? These observations of Gerard de Lairese are all the more surprising as coming from the pen of a painter, for it would be impossible to execute a picture in accordance with them, since it would have no foreground except the frame. Think of a picture without a foreground! It must be confessed that if Miérís did not know how to execute works upon a large scale, Lairese did not know how to talk of pictures on a small one.

If we may judge by the portraits which Miérís has left us of himself, he had a handsome face, gay-looking, but the expression slightly sensual, a brilliant eye, a prominent mouth, overhung by a soft moustache worn in the style adopted by

nothing but her back, who has come to sit for her portrait, but her face appears on the canvas as in a mirror. Both the painter and the model are dressed with a richness and coquettishness which happily the graver is able to render almost with as much accuracy as the colours of the master himself, as may be seen by the example which we furnish (p. 32). Miérís is dressed in black velvet, with tight silk breeches of bright blue, fastened below the knees with garters ornamented by rosettes, and ribbon shoe-ties. Nothing can be more elegant or *recherché* than his appearance. Stultz could not surpass it. While the model is resting, a servant is bringing in refreshments. In another Miérís has evidently made him-

self rather the subject for a painting than the original of a portrait. It is evidently himself whom we see dressed as a trumpeter in the picture bearing that name. (See our engraving, p. 28.) This was, no doubt, executed to have the pleasure of painting himself in the magnificent uniform worn by the Spanish soldiers who were sent into the Low Countries to suppress the insurrection. The costume certainly is very picturesque. If the head were not in this instance full of life and vigour and intelligence, one would think that "The Trumpeter" was chosen merely for the display of a dashing uniform. A tight blue jacket, covered with trappings, and furnished with yellow sleeves, a mezzotine cap of the same colour as the jacket, green gaiters with golden fringes, and a sword with glittering hilt—such is the uniform. And whether Miéris exhibit himself in warlike panoply or by the side of his easel, he is still ever in the midst of luxury. All the objects which make up the learned confusion of a studio contend, we will not say for the spectator's attention, but for whatever of it he has to spare after having bestowed sufficient upon the principal figure. A violoncello resting against a piece of furniture, covered with a curtain, announces the fact, that the painter solaces his labours by occasional performances upon it.

One would imagine that if Miéris displayed in his house as much luxury and magnificence as he affects in his paintings, he would soon have been ruined, in spite of the high price which he put upon his works. Add to this, that owing to the extraordinary delicacy of finish which he bestowed upon all his pictures, he could execute comparatively a small number only, not to speak of the indolent habits which he acquired from his friend Steen. Accordingly we find in many works in which he is mentioned, and notably in the "Catalogue de Lorangère," by Gersaint, his conduct was anything but orderly. His habits were expensive, and involved him in a number of debts, for which he was several times put in prison. One of his creditors kept him there a long time, and when his friends urged him to paint something that would procure his release, he replied, "that the sight of the bar and the sound of the bolts rendered the imagination sterile." Gersaint travelled a good deal in Holland, and while there picked up much information regarding the painters; and it is, therefore, not unlikely that he learnt some of these details from Miéris' own friends. Certainly neither Houbraken nor Campo Weyermann make mention of this circumstance.

Francis Miéris died in 1681, at the age of forty-six, leaving two sons, John and William; the last of whom imitated his manner with considerable ability, and maintained the celebrity of the name. Francis exhausted life rapidly. As a painter his sentiment of the beautiful was lively; as a man he was ever tending towards the bad and degrading. He loved what was tasteful and distinguished, but lived in a public-house; he loved luxury and ruined himself by it. By dint of admiring Steen's wit, he came to imitate his joyous indolence, and his wicked and dishonest carelessness; laughing, glass in hand, at the amount of his debts. But in spite of this gross existence, Miéris always preserved enough love of the beautiful and elegant to impel him to the choice of fine features, delicate complexions, handsome heads, graceful attitudes, and tasteful dress, and those splendid fabrics which were indispensable in his painting, since he never dared to paint the naked figure.

It is not difficult to decide what rank Miéris should assume among painters of familiar scenes. The distinction between the various masters, Terburg, Metz, Gerard Douw, and Miéris, consists rather in shades of talent than degrees of merit. If we examine them closely, we shall find that Miéris is rather below his three rivals. As compared to his master, Gerard Douw, he has, without doubt, a more brilliant colouring, and is more delicate than he in the common features. His celebrated picture, "The Strolling Tinker" in the Dresden Gallery, proves, beyond doubt, that he was able to give great delicacy to the most vulgar physiognomies. It is not easy to forget, when once seen, the expression on the face of this tinker, as he raises a kettle between him and the light, to enable him to see the cracks, with an air worthy of a

learned antiquary who is trying to decipher a precious manuscript, or to verify the enamelling of a piece of old armour, while the woman who owns the article stands at the door of her tavern, shaded by a vine-branch, and awaits the result of the investigation with anxious impatience. But though delicate as Douw, Miéris has not the same nobility and elevation of mind. He could never have painted pictures so full of pathos and simple dignity as "The Dropsical Woman," and "The Reading of the Bible." His works, in short, always make us desire more sentiment and less satire.

Miéris always ably availed himself of the resources of *chiaro-scuro* to subordinate the accessories, and give full prominence to the principal objects. He could soften down unpleasant details by great masses of shadow. He was skilled also in the proprieties of *chiaro-scuro*, if we may be allowed the expression; as, for example, when he painted a *façile* nymph buried in sleep, her head resting on cushions, and disclosing through her open corset a bosom of snowy whiteness, at the farther end of the room an old duenna, who is receiving money from a cavalier, with his hat pulled down over his eyes; he reserves all the light for the sleeping beauty, and casts the act of the old woman into the shade, as if he saw some connexion between the *chiaro-scuro* of morality and of art. But as regards touch, Terburg and Metz seem to us superior to Miéris. Without doubt, the execution of the latter painter is valuable. He impresses his character on each object; he renders the flesh, the silk, the ermine, the velvet, the marble, the ebony, all the drapery, the substances, and it seems at first as if it was perfection itself. At the same time, if we compare Miéris with Terburg, and, above all, with Metz, we perceive all at once that there is still a degree above merit of this sort.

We have stated that Miéris was, *par excellence*, the painter of the Dutch middle classes. Accordingly, many of his subjects are drawn from scenes in their life, and illustrate their costume and manners. "A Young Woman feeding her Parrot" (p. 29), now in the collection of Sir Robert Peel, is one of the best, and decidedly the most celebrated of this class. There is an air of pleasant and abstracted reverie about her face as she feeds her favourite. In the dress Miéris displays all his great powers of imitation. The painting first became celebrated as the "Red Corset."

In "The Philosopher," which we have engraved, Miéris gives evidence of a much higher kind of talent than he has displayed in his other works. In this the elaboration of details, though still carefully attended to, occupies only a secondary position. The main interest of the piece is centred in the principal figure. The old man's head is a fine expression of the idea of calm clear-headedness, of deep thought, and of a life far removed from the petty passions, tumults, and turmoil of the world without.

Finishing is not the great difficulty in painting, if we understand by this term the mixing of colours, and the polish obtained by patience and a scraper, the extreme care bestowed upon all the details, and a certain propriety of pencil which never errs through negligence or oversight. Many Dutch masters have given what was then called the *fine finish*; but the real finish is that which is not perceptible, giving the work the final touches without suffering the trouble bestowed on it to be visible—those expressive touches, we mean, which lend it an air of freedom and boldness. Finishing, in the right acceptation of the word, is rubbing out by a light, graceful, and eloquent touch that wearisome propriety, that solemn uniformity, as fatiguing for the spectator to see as for the painter to create. To finish is to give character to a plan, shading to an outline, and to the essentials of a painting—to the flat parts of the face, for example, or the rendering of a hand—that last emphasis which is life.

Considering that he lived only forty-six years, and finished all his works with extraordinary care, it was impossible that Miéris could have produced a great number. Smith, in his "Catalogue Raisonné" of the most eminent Dutch, Flemish, and French painters, enumerates one hundred and fifty-six works known to be Miéris'. We shall proceed to mention the

principal galleries and collections in Europe in which they are to be found.

In the Belvedere Gallery at Vienna.—“A Sick Girl,” a doctor feeling her pulse. Small figures as far as the knees, signed Fransz Miéris, f. 1656.

“The Silkmercer”—of which we have previously spoken at length—a young woman exhibiting her wares, and a cavalier with his hand on her chin, signed F. Van Miéris, 1660. The Pinacotheca of Munich contains sixteen of Miéris’ works, amongst which may be seen his portrait, in which he represents himself wearing a red cap with ostrich feathers; “A Lady playing with her Parrot, and another Lady with her Dog;” “A Breakfast of Oysters;” and, last of all, the celebrated painting known as “The Sick Woman,” one of his masterpieces. It represents a lady fainting away in the presence of her physician. This was a favourite subject with Miéris, as well as that of the woman with the parrot and dog.

In the Dresden Gallery we find twelve of this master’s works. Of these we shall mention “Tempting Proposals,” a splendid work, to which we have already alluded at some length. This is sometimes called “The Teller of Good Fortune,” but from what we have said above it will be seen that this title is hardly appropriate. “The Tinker,” a composition containing several figures. “A Young Soldier smoking his Pipe.” “The Painter’s Studio” (p. 32): in this Miéris is represented with a young lady, whose portrait appears on the canvas. Another “Painter’s Studio!” in this the artist, with his palette in his hand, is standing beside a visitor showing him a picture which he has just commenced.

The Museum of Amsterdam.—“A Lady seated before a table writing, and a Servant awaiting her orders.” “A Lady playing the Guitar by lamplight.”

Royal Gallery at the Hague.—“Miéris and his Wife,” (p. 20). “Portrait of Horace Schuil,” Professor of Botany at Leyden. “A Child blowing soap bubbles.”

The Hermitage at St. Petersburg.—“The Dutch Rising,” a lady rising and playing with her little dog.

The Leuchtenburg Gallery.—“A Woman holding a cage open upon the table, and giving liberty to a bird.” “A Lady walking on a garden terrace,” accompanied by a cavalier, who holds his hat in his hand, and followed by a little dog; painted on wood, and signed F. Van Miéris, 1675: these two paintings have been etched by Muxel.

The Florence Gallery.—“The Sleeper,” “A Young Man with a Bottle,” “An Old Man offering Money to a Young Woman,” and a “Portrait of the Painter.”

The Montpellier Collection.—“The Pearl Stringer,” a young girl seated before a table covered with a rich cloth; to the left, in mezzotinto, a young waiting woman.

In the Louvre there are four of Miéris’ works.

“A Lady at a Toilette waited upon by a Negress.” Under the Empire this was valued at 1,000 francs, under the Restoration it rose to 5,000.

“Two Ladies, dressed in satin, taking tea in an apartment ornamented with statues.” This is a painting of exquisite finish.

“The Interior of a Household.”

“Portrait of a Man,” signed Fransz Miéris.

In Sir Robert Peel’s collection, “A Young Woman feeding her Parrot” (p. 29), a work of great beauty, of which we give an engraving. It was purchased by Sir Robert for the sum of 305 guineas.

The Bridgewater Gallery.—“A Young Woman at her toilette, dressed in a blue satin jacket, and having her cap tied under her chin.”

“An Interior; a Girl laughing, and an Infant at her side.”

“Portrait of the Painter.” This is taken from the St. Victor and Pourtales collections. It is a little doubtful, however, inasmuch as the same painting appears at Munich, and Waagen makes no mention of it.

In the possession of Queen Victoria, in Buckingham Palace, there are four of Miéris’ works.

“A Child playing Frolics,” dated 1663; a repetition of the painting which may be seen at the Hague.

“A Woman with a Parrot;” in this the same red corset appears which we see at Munich and in Sir Robert Peel’s collection.

“A Smoker, and a Young Girl presenting him with a glass of water.” Figures half length.

“Miéris and his Wife.” The painter is pulling the ears of a little dog which his wife is holding on her knees; in the foreground is the mother of the animal. We have engraved this picture (p. 20).

Mr. T. Hope’s collection.—“A Gentleman wearing a brown cap with blue feathers, in a coat of olive green;” before him is a bottle of wine, and a violin resting against the window. A young woman with her back to the spectator writes down the bill. The painting is dated 1660. This is one of the *chefs-d’œuvre* of the master.

Gallery of the Marquis of Bute at Sutton House.—“The Discovered Letter.” A mother reproaching her daughter, who stands in tears with a letter in her hand.

Miéris’ drawings are very scarce. They are extremely delicate. There are some studies of heads, sketched with black lead, known to be his, executed with the utmost care. They are often washed in Indian ink; the truth of the flesh and the excellent rendering of the draperies are as remarkable in the drawings as in the paintings.

Miéris had under his tuition Peter Lermans, Karel de Moor, and his two sons, John and William Miéris; the last was known as the younger Miéris. In the last century, a grandson of Francis was still living, who had been the pupil of his father William, and who was the author of many works, a list of which he himself gave to Argenville, from whom we borrow it:—“A Description of the Episcopal Seals and Coins of the Bishops of Utrecht.”

“History of the Princes of the Houses of Bavaria, of Burgundy, and of Austria, who have reigned over the Low Countries,” 3 vols. folio; with more than a thousand medals drawn by the author from the originals.

“Chronicle of Holland,” Leyden, 1740—1744.

“Chronicle of Antwerp,” Leyden, 1743, 1744.

“Dissertations upon Feudal Law in Holland,” Leyden, 1748. 8vo.

“The Great Book of the Charters of the Counts of Holland,” Leyden, 1748. 8vo.

“The Great Book of the Charter of the Counts of Holland,” Leyden, 1753. 4 vols. folio.

“The Privileges and Customs of the Country of Delfsand.”

Great numbers of engravers have reproduced Miéris’ works.

Amongst those best known are—

Bary—“The Drunken Woman Asleep.”

Basan—“The Dutch Rising.” “The Dutch Breakfast.”

“The Lace-worker” of the old gallery of Brühl. “The Fair Gardener.” “The Dutch Nap.”

Blooteling—“The Portrait of Miéris.”

Greenwood has engraved “The Portraits of Miéris and his Wife, and the Little Dog,” in the same style.

Igonnet—“The Flemish Market-woman.”

Migneret—“A young Girl giving alms.”

Haid—“The Trumpeter awaiting orders,” a painting in the Burghauss collection. “The Surgeon,” in the Kieson collection at Augsburg.

Villain—“The young Man with Bottle,” in the Florence Gallery.

Wille has engraved us one of Miéris’ works, “The Dutch Knitter,” which, however, has been attributed to Kelscher. “The Absent Observer,” from the Paten Cabinet, which we have engraved: a boy looking out of a window at something passing outside with an abstracted expression. “The Dutch Cook.”

In England, it has been more than once observed, there are rarely large sales of pictures—an evidence of national prosperity which has seldom been remarked. There can be no surer sign of increasing wealth and stability, than the immobility of moveable property. To obtain any idea of the market value of pictures, therefore, we are obliged to resort to the great continental sales, where the overthrow of proud houses



has brought the heirlooms of many generations to the hammer.

The Gaignat sale, 1768. Three pictures of Miéris:—"A Young Girl," "An Invalid and her Physician," painted on wood; price £238. "A Lady in a scarlet dressing-gown," trimmed with white ermine, and a straw-coloured petticoat. She is giving some cake to her parrot. This is the famous "Red Corset," of which we have already spoken, and of which we give an engraving (p. 29), now in the collection of Sir

the door of a porch. A painting on wood, originally from the collection of the Duke de Choiseul; price £20. "A Woman feeding a Bird," with another painting of G. Schulcken; together, £92.

The Argenville sale, 1778. A drawing of F. Miéris, representing a Female bust; price £6 10s. A Man's bust with a hat on his head, drawn on vellum like the preceding.

Calonne sale, 1778. "A Lady and her Dog." She wears a straw bonnet trimmed with satin and white feathers, and on



TEMPTING PROPOSALS. FROM A PAINTING BY MIÉRIS.

Robert Peel. It was sold for £124. It is painted upon copper. "A Smoker," half-length, leaning his elbow on the table, and wearing a hat ornamented with feathers. Price £7.

The Randon de Boisset sale, 1777. "A Young Lady writing," upon a table-cloth of red velvet; a young man awaiting her orders, and a dog sleeping upon a pillow. Price £324.

The Prince de Conti's sale, 1777. "A Blind Man led by his Dog," and accompanied by a little boy, asking charity at

her bosom a gossamer handkerchief. This came from the Lublin collection at Amsterdam; price £58.

Choiseul Praslin sale, 1793. "A Young Woman feeding her Parrot"—the "Red Corset" of which we have already spoken. This time it was sold for £338. "An Artist examining an antique Statue by candlelight." Another figure stands close beside him, and farther off two students, one of whom bears a light also. This is a splendid display of skill in *chiaro-scuro*.

Solirene sale, 1812. "Sarah and Abraham," £32. "The

Song Interrupted;" a lady in a morning dress of red velvet, holding a music-book upon her knees, another figure offering her a glass of wine. Price £112.

Clos sale, 1812. "A Young Girl brought back by a Gipsy Woman." She is on her knees asking pardon of her mother; her father is in the background. Price £88.

Laperrière sale, 1817. "The Registrar Fagel," a painting mentioned by Descamps. Price £64.

Erard sale, 1832. "A Young Lady studying a Piece of

of pearls in her hair. From the famous Braamkamp collection at Amsterdam; also purchased by M. Demidoff for £200.

Perregaux sale, 1841. "The Song Interrupted." This painting, which we have just seen figuring in the Solirene sale, where it brought only £112, in 1841 rose to £880.

Giroux sale, 1851. "A Young Lady," elegantly dressed, and holding a mandolin in her hand, offering bread to a spaniel; beside her a gentleman leaning on a table covered with a rich cloth. Price £42.



DIVERTED ATTENTION. FROM A PAINTING BY MIÉRIS.

Music." A mandolin lies before her on a table decorated with sculpture. She wears a satin robe, but without neckerchief or head-dress. Price £69.

The Ducheis de Berri's sale, 1837. "Portrait of a Magistrate," half-length, beneath a peristyle, through which appears the entrance to a park. This was purchased by M. Demidoff for £240. "The Lady of Quality." She is descending a staircase, which leads to the avenue of a park. She is dressed in white satin, with red ribbons and loose trimmings; a cluster

The following are facsimiles of Miéris' monograms and signatures:—

**MR**

**MR**

*F. van Mieris*

*Fran Mieris*  
1675